Freedom

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NOTES.

The Crisis in China.

The struggle between the rival factions in China is nearing a critical stage as the Nationalists approach Shanghai, the greatest and most valuable port in the country. If the Nationalists succeed in gaining control the enormous income from Customs will fall into their hands and the Northerners will be bankrupt. The fight for Shanghai will therefore probably decide the question as to which party is to govern China. Rumours are abroad that a compromise may be effected, and as both parties are anti-Imperialist the days of foreign aggression seem to be ended. The British forces, in conjunction with the Italian troops sent by Mussolini, have occupied ground a mile deep outside the Settlement, on purely Chinese territory, as a precautionary measure, we are told; but a more provocative act could hardly be imagined. If there should be a clash between British and Chinese it will be mainly due to the former, who are still acting as in the days of the Opium Wars. But the movement for independence is now too strong to be stopped by foreign Powers, who will be forced to abandon their privileged position sooner or later. The workers' strike at Shanghai was a strike against their own rulers, and the question arises as to whether their material position will be much better under a new Nationalist Government than it is now. Of course, certain concessions as to hours and wages may be made at first, but we do not swallow the talk about the Cantonese Government being a workers' and peasants' Government. The Nationalist party has been financed by the rich Chinese merchants and manufacturers at home and abroad, and when this party has settled down in the Government saddle the workers and peasants will be put in their place as hewers of wood and drawers of water. Their real struggle for freedom will then commence.

Winston Churchill's War Book.

Slowly but surely the truth about the Great War leaks out. In the last two volumes of this book on the War, Winston Churchill throws a flood of light on the "war of attrition" which we were told at the time was bleeding Germany to death. He shows that had it continued it would have been the Allies who would have bled to death. In the three weeks of the first great clash in 1914 the permanent loss of the French (meaning killed or prisoners) totalled 330,000, besides 280,000 wounded—over 600,000 casualties in the French armies alone. Three-fourths of this loss was inflicted in less than eight days! In the offensives of 1915-1917 the British and French armies suffered "nearly double the casualties inflicted on the Germans." Read the lying press of those days about "wearing down the Germans." At the battle of the Somme 60,000 British soldiers fell in one day! Mr. Churchill says that nearly 20,000,000 men perished or shed their blood before the sword was wrested from the hands of Germany; and in the closing lines of his book he says: "Surely, Germans, for history it is enough!" We would say: "Surely, workers, for history it is enough!" Surely the lesson has been burnt into your heart and brain, and never again will you allow your rulers to throw you into the fiery furnace of war. But even to-day the Balance of Power is the dominating factor in the intrigues of European diplomats. France, having drawn Poland and several of the smaller States into alliance, is now seeking an agreement with Germany. Great Britain, on the other hand, compelled to safeguard the Mediterranean as her road to India, has drawn Italy into her orbit, as the one whose navy and gigantic air fleet will help to counteract the power of France. The praise of Mussolini by the capitalist press of this country is a prelude to an agreement with the Italian Dictator. Workers, keep a watch ere it is too late. Your rulers may spring another 1914 on you!

Shaw on Socialism.

The latest edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" contains an article on Socialism by Bernard Shaw. Although a supporter of the Labour Party, he has little faith in democracy. Unbounded hopes based on successive extensions of the electoral franchise have been disappointed, "because the voters, male and female, being politically untrained and uneducated, have (*a*) no grasp of constructive measures; (*b*) loathe taxation as such; (*c*) dislike being governed at all; and (*d*) dread and resent any extension of official interference as an encroachment of their personal liberty." These healthy dislikes of officialdom are abhorrent to a good Fabian, who loves nothing better than drawing up rules for the regulation of other people's lives. Mr Shaw's ideal State is to have as its first principles "the iniquity of private property, the paramount social importance of equality of income, and the criminality of idleness." Compulsory national service is essential in Socialism. This, of course, implies the maximum of interference with personal liberty. Mr. Shaw once wrote a pamphlet on "The Impossibility of Anarchism," but if the above is his idea of the Socialist State, we think it would be quite easy to write a pamphlet on "The Impossibility of Shavian Socialism." For instance, imagine Shaw in his future State as a playwright. Idleness is a crime against the State. An official, unversed in the mysteries of playwriting, finds Shaw strolling along a country road thinking out dramatic situations for his next play. He asks him why he is not working. How will Shaw convince him that he is working and earning that equal income? If he has friends in the Department of Art, he may escape prison; but if he has not, he may soon find himself in a dramatic situation—i.e., in prison. If the State provides equal incomes, it will naturally require equality of work; and who will judge as to the respective values of the thinking hours of Shaw and the working hours of the dustman or any other manual labourer? The Shavian State would require an enormous horde of officials to keep an eye on everyone to ensure that they earned the equal income, and we may be sure that the most plausible and crafty would secure the soft jobs in the bureaucracy which would neutralise the value of the equal income. Shaw's plan would necessitate a Dictatorship, which probably explains his remark a few years ago that Lenin was the only statesman in Europe.

Instalment Buying in U.S.A.

Few people realise the enormous growth in U.S.A. of the system of buying goods on the instalment plan. Furniture, motor cars, clothing, jewellery, pianos, in fact almost anything can now be bought in this way. A few dollars down and you take home your motor car or whatever you have bought. You sign on the dotted line and mortgage your income for several years ahead. Super-salesmen lure their victims on in the race to "keep up with the Joneses"—that is, the folk with more money to burn. The United States Chamber of Commerce estimated in 1925 that £1,000,000,000, or 17 per cent. of the retail business of the country, was done on the instalment plan. Of course, when times are prosperous and wages good, regular payments are easy; but when a slump in trade hits the country and payment is impossible, the crash will be tremendous. If we could imagine employers as a class thinking nationally, we should say it was another of their devices to keep their workers on a chain, for few of them would risk losing their jobs while having to meet many weekly or monthly instalments. We wonder the moralists and preachers of thrift have not enlarged on the iniquity of not looking forward to a rainy day. As an instance of the horrible effect of the craze, a news item in an American exchange says that a man who was charged with kidnapping the daughter of a wealthy manufacturer told the judge that he had done it to obtain money to pay for a motor car he had bought on the instalment plan. The extent of this system may explain partly the high wages of which we hear so much, but the next trade depression in the States will probably be a disaster that will wipe out all recollections of this fictitious prosperity.

To the International Proletariat.

FELLOW WORKERS,—Again we are compelled to appeal to you on behalf of the revolutionists imprisoned and exiled in Russia. Over nine years have passed since the great October Revolution, but political persecution does not cease. In truth, it is growing more systematic and ruthless as the years go by. The safer the Bolsheviki feel themselves in the Government saddle, the more drastic is their suppression of the workers and of those that voice the protest of the proletariat against subjection and exploitation. The one-time revolutionary party has become the most autocratic Government of the world. Forgotten are the revolutionary ideals, forgotten the sacred promises to advance the cause of the downtrodden. Nothing is left of the sublime purpose and spirit of the Revolution except the tyranny of a few politicians who brazenly call themselves the "dictatorship of the proletariat," and in the name of that proletariat enslave and suppress the workers.

The Bolshevik Government is now pursuing one sole object, to secure itself as the exclusive absolute power of the great country of Russia. It is for this purpose that it dances attendance upon kings and capitalists abroad, while at home it crushes every liberty of the people and stifles every protest with inexorable hand. The workers of Russia are being hopelessly enslaved to the resurrected bourgeoisie at home and to the international capitalists whom the Bolsheviki invite to exploit Russia and her people.

It is in pursuance of this policy that the revolutionary elements are being exterminated, most mercilessly of all the Anarchists and Anarcho-Syndicalists. For these are the most uncompromising revolutionists and loyal defenders of the proletariat, and the Government knows them to be the most dangerous enemies of tyranny and the greatest handicap to its reactionary policies.

The prisons of Russia are filled with these victims of the Bolshevik régime. Persecution is growing and no means are too barbarous to stifle every protest. Do not believe the Communist lie that only counter-revolutionists are imprisoned in Russia. It is the most shameless and cowardly hypocrisy that any tyrant ever practised upon the people. On the contrary, it is the best labour and revolutionary elements that are shut up in dungeons or exiled to the northermost parts of the country to fall victims to slow death from cold, starvation, and disease. The unprincipled and the career-seeker, the former executioners of the Tsar and the resurrected exploiter, have in Russia the most favourable chance to grow rich and fat. It is the stool pigeon and the climber that thrive under the protecting wing of the Communist régime. But the workers who have spirit and ideas and the courage to stand up for them—the men and women who dare express the aspirations of labour for a better and freer day—it is they who feel the crushing hand of the Government gone mad with power and impatient of any criticism.

The best and most devoted of our comrades are in prison or exile. Most of them had suffered persecution under the Tsars and the greater part of them have now been in continuous imprisonment for years—some for five, six, and even seven years. Not for anything they had done, nor for any offence committed against the people, but merely because of the fact that they are Anarchists, idealists too loyal to be bribed into silence or terrorised into compromise. Take such men and women, for instance, as Aron Baron, Tatyana Polosova, Meyer-Rubintchik, Maria Weger, Ivan Tarasiuk, and scores of others who have now for years been buried alive in prison or exile. No charges have ever been made against them, no trial ever given them. They rot in prison because they remain true to the spirit of the October Revolution so shamelessly betrayed by the Bolsheviki.

The Government is resorting to the most inhuman and savage methods of treating the politicals. They are thrown about from prison to prison, then sent to exile, often suddenly transferred from a hot clime to the frozen Arctic regions, only again to be imprisoned, and thus hopelessly continuing the vicious circle. Frequently they are cruelly beaten, brutal violence is practised upon the women, and every means used to make their lives miserable and drive the politicals to death or self-destruction.

Now the Bolsheviki have even revived the terrible Solovetsky Islands (known as Solovki) as a place for the imprisonment of politicals. Situated in the Arctic zone, in the White Sea, those islands are a convenient place to bury alive the political opponents of the Government. The great moral indignation aroused abroad in revolutionary and labour circles by the outrages and murders committed against the politicals in the Solovki had compelled the Bolsheviki to abolish that hell-hole in the latter part of 1925. Common offenders remained there to be slowly tortured to death, and politicals from conquered Georgia have lately been sent by the hundreds to those Polar islands. But now the Bolsheviki are again sending politicals of every party to the Solovetsky, in spite of their solemn promise to cease that practice.

The treatment the politicals receive, the tortures they suffer, can be easily understood from the fact that they are driven to such desperation as to seek relief in suicide. Long-continued hunger strikes, individual and collective, do not move the Bolshevik heart. Men are actually compelled to resort to self-destruction. The information that comes to us from the prisons of Tobolsk, Upper Ural, Yaroslavl, and other bastilles, certified to by all the politicals imprisoned there, is hair-raising in its description of the brutality and fiendishness practised there. Thus the peasant Anarchist Grigoryev, desperate with unbearable torture, has resorted to suicide by attempting to burn himself alive.

Such cases were comparatively rare, even in the worst prisons of the Romanov régime. When they happened and became known abroad, the whole world was shocked and effective protests were raised in every land. And now? Where is the conscience of the world? Where is, at least, the protesting voice of Liberals and Radicals, of progressive Labour bodies and similar organisations? Are they so awed by the new capitalistic achievements of the Bolsheviki that they dare not "hurt Russia" by protesting even against the most heaven-crying atrocities?

Fellow-workers, do not be duped by the empty revolutionary phrases of the Bolsheviki and their apologists. Do not confuse the Russian Revolution with the Bolshevik Government. They are opposites, contradictory and mutually exclusive. The Bolshevik Government is the betrayal of the Revolution. It is reactionary in principle, methods, and tactics. The purpose of the Revolution is the emancipation of labour, greater liberty and aspiration. The aim of the Government is to secure and perpetuate the Communist politicians in their power. Judge the Bolshevik Government by its deeds, not by its mere words. Judge it by its friends. The Journal of the New York Chamber of Commerce appeals to the big bankers and manufacturers of America in behalf of the Bolshevik Government. It praises it in the highest terms and points out the unlimited financial opportunities to exploit Russia and her people. Read Tchicherin's statement in the Chamber of Commerce Journal, over his own signature, to the effect that the interests of Russia are *identical* with those of American capital. Read Kamenev's appeal, in the same journal, begging American manufacturers to invest in Russia "for the mutual benefit of both countries." Watch Tchicherin, silk hat in hand, bowing before the King of Italy—to the greater glory of the Revolution! See him present gifts of gold and silver cigarette cases to the chiefs of the Italian police and secret service. Listen to Mussolini declare his great admiration of the Russian Government and see him read the telegraphic congratulations of the same on escaping the avenging hand of the Italian revolutionists martyred by the Mussolini bravos. Judge the "revolutionary" Government of Russia by its friends, its deeds. And bethink yourselves whether you can shake hands with the very political party that is shooting down and imprisoning your comrades in Russia.

Workers of the World! We call upon you to raise your voice against the systematic crushing of every labour and revolutionary aspiration in Russia. It is the clear purpose of the Bolshevik Government to exterminate the last vestiges of revolutionary thought and effort, and it is up to you, fellow-workers, to put a stop to these heinous proceedings.

International Labour has the power to do it. Raise the question in your organisations, take action immediately. Thousands of our martyred brothers in Russia are looking toward you for help. Do not become a party to their torture and murder by inactivity and acquiescence! It is most urgent that you act at once. Let your motto be: *Immediate and unconditional liberty for all revolutionary political prisoners*!

Meanwhile think also of the great need of the men and women in prison and exile. Their existence depends upon your aid. They call to you not only for moral but also for material help. The miserable food or money allowance they receive from the Government is not sufficient to hold body and soul together. Your support is necessary to keep them alive, to supply them with warm clothing in the frozen North of Siberia, to sustain with food the women and children exiled to the furthermost parts of the country, and to inspire them with new courage and hope in the active solidarity of their brothers abroad.

Do your duty! Come to their rescue! And do it quickly!

For the *Secretariat*, I.W.M.A. Relief Fund.
ALEXANDER BERKMAN.

Communications and funds address to: I.W.M.A. Relief Fund, Fritz Kater, Warschauer Str., 62, Berlin O 34, Germany.

EMMA GOLDMAN'S TOUR IN CANADA.

Continuing her tour in Canada, Emma Goldman arrived at Toronto on November 26, and was heartily welcomed by a large number of comrades, who did everything possible to make her visit a pleasant one, several taking it in turns to provide hospitality.

During her stay she gave eleven lectures in English in six weeks, and retained the interest of her audiences to the end. The first of the series, on "Ibsen," brought together a large audience and marked a splendid beginning of the rest that followed, lectures on "Dictatorship: Bolshevist and Fascist," "Tendencies in Modern Education," seven lectures on "Foremost Russian Dramatists: their Life and Works," and a lecture in the Labour Temple, the headquarters of Canadian organised Labour, on "The European Labour Situation." A charge was made for admission to the lectures, nearly all of which were well attended. Without any previous experience in organising English meetings, our Jewish comrades showed great energy in advertising these lectures and are to be congratulated on their success.

Jewish meetings were held in the Labour Lyceum (the headquarters of the organised Jewish workers), at the Peretz Schule, and a huge meeting at the Standard Theatre on Sunday, January 2, the result of an intensive advertising campaign.

Before reaching Toronto Emma Goldman heard all sorts of rumours as to what the Communists would do when she started speaking. Their paper in Toronto was full of the usual scurrilous attacks, trotting out the old story that Emma was paid by the capitalist press, and all the other lies we know so well. But the Communists who attended the meetings were as quiet and attentive as the rest of the audience, and their questions on Russia showed a desire to get at the truth. Someone suggested that E. G. has mesmeric powers; but she writes: "Rather do I think that intelligent Communists have learned their own lessons during the many struggles of the Opposition in Russia. They are probably realising that the Moscow Dictatorship is as deadly to Communists who dare think for themselves as to any other political opponents."

At a dinner arranged in her honour she spoke of the terrible position of the political prisoners in Russia and made a strong appeal for funds to provide them with a few of the necessaries of life. As a result a sum of $236.00 was contributed by those present. Altogether over $300.00 was collected at her meetings.

Toronto seems likely to be a fertile ground for Anarchist propaganda if speakers could be found, but unfortunately they are lacking to-day. Our Jewish comrades do excellent work among their own people, but a popular movement can only flourish if carried on in the language of the country.

The press did their best to boycott the meetings, with one notable exception, the *Star*, which made up for all the rest, their reporter showing he had a good grasp of revolutionary ideas, including Anarchism, which is most unusual with press representatives.

Quite a lot of literature was sold at the meetings, FREEDOM and the *Road to Freedom* selling like hot cakes.

Emma Goldman went on to Winnipeg, and will speak again at Toronto and Montreal on her return.

DEATH OF JESSIE WESTWATER.

Tom Bell, writing from Los Angeles, California, sends us the following note on the death of a comrade whom many will remember in the early days of the Anarchist movement in Scotland.

Died December 27, 1926, at Berkeley, California, aged 57, Jessie (Bell) Westwater, formerly of Edinburgh, London, and New York. For many years in poor health, she has not been connected with any movement for a long time, but in the nineties her home was the centre of the Anarchist movement in Scotland, and she was one of the starters of the Women's Trade Union movement there. Not by the brilliance of the success obtained nor by the length of years in which one found it possible to fight should one's work be judged by one's comrades, but by the sincerity, the devotion, and the courage of the effort.

International Congress of War Resisters.

An International Congress of War Resisters will be held at Amsterdam on May 21 and 22. Pacifists are heartily invited. Funds are urgently needed to defray expenses. For information, write to S. H. Jonkmann, Nassaukade, 149, Amsterdam, Holland. Many international speakers have promised to be present.

Bulgaria's Appeal.

The Committee for the Relief of Anarchists imprisoned and persecuted in Bulgaria sends us a lengthy appeal which reveals a state of things that fifteen years ago would have appeared incredible, but to-day is an almost universal story. Almost everywhere in Europe those who venture to disapprove, even in the mildest manner, of the military Dictatorships now riding roughshod over their unhappy subjects are shot, hanged, imprisoned, or driven into exile. It is hard to grade these infamies, for all are unspeakable, but probably conditions in Bulgaria are among the worst. According to the appeal in question, during the last four years the Bulgarian Military Dictatorship has been guilty of murdering some forty thousand persons, and the gaols are filled to overflowing with political prisoners. Those dependent on them are in the direst distress, and the entire working population is suffering acutely, for production is coming to a standstill and an economic crisis of the severest type is scourging the country.

Those who issue this appeal are all Anarchists who have succeeded in escaping from their native country. The Bulgarian Committee has its headquarters at the Librairie Internationale, 72, Rue des Prairies, Paris (XX.), France, and to that address all money and other contributions, which are solicited most earnestly, should be sent. Correspondence is conducted under the auspices of the Committee in Russian, French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Esperanto, and there is expressed a fervent hope that international action may be taken.

Naturally we echo that hope, and not only for Bulgaria and Europe in general, but also for Mexico and for Central and South America; for there, too, every rebel against the plutocratic-military Dictatorships now engaged in gathering the world into their clutches is harried remorselessly. Such conditions should not be endured, but they are enduring, and there is as yet no prospect of relief. Sooner or later, of course, they will have to go; but the when and the how depend on the energy, courage, and intelligence of the oppressed, and to the awakening of a world-conscience that will make short work of all these tyrannies all efforts should be directed.

Revolutionary Syndicalism—An Appeal.

The breakdown of the miners' resistance and the consequent disintegrating effect on their organisation; the shameful and cowardly end to the General Strike, and the generally traitorous behaviour of those who style themselves leaders of Labour must convince all those who look to the industrial and economic weapon of the workers as the only means of achieving freedom, that it is now necessary to build up a movement in this country which shall have for its aims and policy the clear-cut presentation to the workers of their economic power and consequent ability to secure their own emancipation without looking to either State or political party for aid or intervention. In short, Revolutionary Syndicalism.

With this end in view it is proposed to publish a new paper devoted to this policy, which shall be the official organ of the International Working Men's Association. The I.W.M.A. is the International of the Revolutionary Syndicalist and Anarcho-Syndicalist organisations which exist at this moment in all countries except Great Britain. This journal will thus be the means of keeping British workers in touch with the revolutionary *workers* (not political parties) of other countries.

All Left-Wing Trade Unionists who are dissatisfied with the present unsatisfactory state of affairs, and all Anarchists and others who are in sympathy with the methods and aims of Revolutionary Syndicalism, are urged to communicate with Wm. Mainwaring, 8, William Street, Treherbert, Rhondda, South Wales.

The Origin of Armies.

"In ancient times," says Renan, "an army almost always had its birth in a band of pillagers, or, which amounts to the same thing, of gentry who had no desire to work, and were determined to live on others toil. Naturally these brigands, when once their authority had been recognised, became the protectors of those who worked for them; and thus, by the conversion of the brigand into the gendarme, order has been created." Thus history repeats itself eternally; for is it not the contention of the Bolshevists that the Red Army is needed for the protection of the Russian worker, and how does this differ from the Fascist slogan? Still, as always, the masses are blind to realities and enslaved by words.—*Le Réveil.*

FREEDOM.

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Imperialism the Issue.

Do we realise that, thanks to the great struggle going on in China, the thought of all the world is now becoming concentrated on one single issue, and that this is *our* issue; the one that we, through generations, have made most specially our own? That men and women, whether individually or in those groups to which we give the name of nations, should be masters of their own lives and destinies, has been always the very cornerstone of Anarchism, and to this we have held all else subordinate. It is this which makes us the irreconcileable foes of all Imperialism, whether it be the Imperialism of purse or sword; which makes us hate the invasive monopolist who robs men of their independence and reduces them to economic slavery; which makes us hate Dictators, and all their hordes of official underlings, because their mission is to compel obedience to mandates; which makes us hate Militarism, because it kills to enforce submission; which makes us certain that life under Freedom is the only life worth living. Do we realise that this is the great issue now on trial, not in some small debating society frequented by a handful of enthusiasts but in the open court of all the world?

Surely this is our great opportunity; one that if neglected will not soon present itself again. Surely this is the time to drop all side issues, all trumpery, make-believe expedients, and all those personal animosities and recriminations which serve only to nail us to the cross of sectarianism and degrade us to the level of a special caste. For, always and everywhere it is the spirit of caste against which we have to fight. It is the lust to make others subordinate that spurs the aggressive on to conquest; that whips them to the acquisition of territory they themselves cannot use, and to the accumulation of fortunes they cannot personally spend. Power, the capture of positions which will convert into a dominant caste those who occupy them, is always the leading motive; and it is essentially a slavery motive, for it paralyses the constructive genius of our species, smothers its individuality, and chains it to the yoke of a poverty that is to-day absurd.

All this is summed up in the one word Imperialism; for Imperialism has always as its aim the subjugation of the allegedly inferior many by the allegedly superior few. Whatever its apologists may say, Imperialism always stunts the race's growth; keeps it childishly dependent on its self-appointed guardians, and strips it of virility. Man stripped of his virility is worthless.

The extent to which this mutilation of the race's manhood has gone is already self-evident. To what self-mastery, for example, can the English factory hand pretend? From the cradle to the grave he toils at a dictated task, and he is everlastingly afraid of losing his job. The agricultural worker is absolutely under the thumb of the local landed aristocracy, and few indeed are the villagers who dare call their souls their own. Even with the trading and professional classes things are little better. How many shopkeepers venture to offend a wealthy customer? How many lawyers or doctors care to quarrel with their patrons? And with the politicians things are even worse. There none has the spirit to break away from party bonds, unless indeed the Opposition guarantees him a better post or promises him a more brilliant future.

During the last ten years, and since my return from the United States, I have mixed freely with almost every class in England, and everywhere I have found a growing impatience with this universal serfdom. Men in almost every walk of life have expressed themselves to me as sick of the helplessness in which they find themselves; and, in my opinion, a revolution that held out any real hope of the recovery of their lost independence would be far more generally welcomed than the ruling Raj imagines. But for the most part those who grumble are utterly distrustful of their fellow-grumblers. Some of them may have had at one time faith in the Liberal Party, but Liberalism has proved itself merely a thing of words and has refused to face realities. Many cling to the Labour Party, but only for want of something better, it being well understood that the Labour Party has no clear-cut policy, unless indeed it be that of pandering to popularity in the hope of catching votes and so scrambling once again into the seats of office. Apart from this great mass of sceptical party adherents stands an immense mob of Socialists, Communists, Anarchists, Land Reformers, and all sorts of malcontents. Many of these people are in a desperate mood, for they see no light ahead; and, as they feel incessantly the urge to action, they join all kinds of superficial and hopeless movements. Some great stirring of the spirit; some awakening to a vital, unifying truth, is needed for the crystallisation of these separated particles now floating impotently on fluid currents of emotionalism. I suggest that the impending struggle between the Imperialism of caste and the Democracy natural to the mass is destined to be that unifying influence.

Many years ago De Tocqueville convinced me that Democracy's one aspiration was Equality. All the great upheavals of the last hundred and fifty years—the American, the French, the Russian, and other revolutions too numerous to mention—have been attempts by the newly-born democratic Spirit of the Age to bring about some nearer approach to social equality; and invariably they have been fought tooth and nail by the then dominant Aristocracy, bent on the retention of its special privileges and the preservation of its caste. Once more we are entering on another phase of the same struggle, but this time on a vastly grander scale. For all we know, at this moment the Chinese question may set the world ablaze once more, and in any such contest neutrality will be impossible. Indeed, I cannot think that there will be any general tendency to neutrality, for all the democratic feeling of this country is heartily on the side of China, and all the aristocratic feeling bitterly opposed to her.

In this, as in other countries, the lines are becoming more and more sharply drawn. How could it be otherwise? The modern worker, conscious of the possibilities that would be within his grasp if only he could shake off the grip of the dominant classes now using the enormously productive powers of modern civilisation for their own personal gratification, cannot be expected to be contented, and he is not. On the other hand, the dominant classes, saturated with the spirit of caste and panic-stricken at the prospect of changes that may jeopardise their present security, stand solidly opposed to all those democratic tendencies which are the very soul of the Labour and revolutionary movement. Our landed aristocracy is by far the most powerful in existence, and it is Imperialistic to a man. Our mercantile class, depending largely for its profits on the materials supplied to it by the cheap labour of subjugated countries, is almost invariably Imperialistic; and practically every one of the Government employees located at thousands of commanding points in our far-flung domains is Imperialistic to the core. All their training, all the habits of their daily life, mould them to that. The Anglo-Indian official, for example, understands clearly that he is there to rule, and that his first duty is to uphold at every cost the prestige of the ruling caste.

I am no admirer of the clumsy and irrational methods by which Democracy, as yet barely awakened to realities, is tinkering with the great social problem; but I am the firmest of believers in the spirit of Democracy, which demands that every member of the human family, the development of which has been Evolution's crowning triumph, shall be lifted out of the bog of inferiority in which the masses still are mired and set on the firm ground of Equal Opportunity, which is his proper birthright. And Imperialism is the universal enemy because it refuses to recognise that human claim, and intends to fight it to the last ditch.

World-shaking events are all tending to simplify the issue, and to bring about that solidarity among the workers which only a great and simple issue can secure. To assist in clarifying that issue and in demonstrating its fundamental character; to join hands wherever possible with all who distrust and dread Imperialism; to get out of the littleness of the past, dominated so largely by pedantry and a spirit of exclusiveness which should be alien to us, and to align ourselves, in both sympathy and action, with the greatness of the incumbent struggle—this is surely the crying necessity of the hour. By such a course we should profit vastly, for we should shake ourselves free from sectarianism and discover in those who have hitherto regarded us as merely a band of unpractical dreamers, much to be distrusted, a host of allies. What we have been saying for so many years, perhaps confusedly and awkwardly, has become the central standard around which a mighty struggle will unquestionably swirl. That should inspire us with a consciousness of our movement's dignity, and spur every one of us to redoubled effort.

W. C. O.

Lexocracy.

Excessive reliance on legislation is one of the prime evils of our day. The early Greeks coined a great number of words to denote various forms of government; but so far as we know they did not have a word to denote government by lawyers and politicians. A new word is needed in the lexicon of the day; that word is Lexocracy—government by law-makers, law practitioners, and interpreters of law. It is the form of government under which Australia groans to-day; and it threatens to be still more formidable to-morrow. At the rate this new form of government is evolving, it is possible that within the memory of living man the population of the Commonwealth will consist in the majority of legislators, lawyers, and legal interpreters, and their dependents. The minority will continue to grow wool and mutton and other needs of life; and no doubt the perfection of law and order will be such that the few people who do need to toil with their hands to keep society going, will be able to supply the wants of the Lexocrats and themselves by working some 22 hours a week. It seems like the Golden Age being prematurely born!

Although we adhere to the philosophy of optimism, it is hard not to see dangers inherent in this new form of government. All through history we find that those who sought to govern and dominate their fellows were not the best of men; frequently were the worst. Now and then a patriot has lived and died for his country, rather than for the rewards of office or the fatal lure of the goddess Fama. But these belong to history. In our days of adult suffrage, and one vote one value, all men can aspire to be rulers of the Commonwealth No one would deny that this is other than it should be; but the fact that a man was once a doctor, or a rouseabout, or a wharf-lumper, or a horse-driver, or anything else, does not give him any special fitness for the work of legislation. He may be full of professed zeal for the welfare of his fellow; also have his mind rather muddled with crude and incoherent notions of Socialism, yet be a failure when he comes to the task of running a country. He may know, of course, something about his own trade or profession, but that does not give him a right divine to govern men. And, indeed, when such men become legislators, especially when they become Prime Ministers, they reveal all the lust for office, all the odious itch for tyrannising over their fellows, as did ever a tyrant of the past. It is, in fact, quite possible for a man who has been half-starved all his life as an agitator for Socialism, hunted from pillar to post, by the custodians of law and order, to develop into a Mussolini of politics, and reveal the fact that his quarrel with things as they are is purely personal. Under the cover of altruism, see what selfish seekers for office, what petty tyrants in office, have been thrown up by the Australian Labour Movement! It is significant of much that two of the worst men of this type have been lawyers as well as politicians. The Holmans and the Hugheses of Australia are the cousins german of the Lloyd Georges of the Old Country. These men prate of Democracy: they know little, and care less, about Democracy; what they live for and sell their souls for is power and pelf.

Bearing these facts in mind, the workers of Australia, whose representatives are chiefly politicians and lawyers, men of talk and mighty with the tongue, will hesitate before giving this growing class more of the power they live for and upon. However much human law may have been necessary in the past, history teaches us that the reign of law has been attended by great evils. Law as laid down by legislators, and codified by lawyers and judges, is apt to confine the freedom of the human spirit. It always tends to become an evil, even when it has succeeded in removing a greater evil. The spirit of laws is the spirit of those enactments of the Medes and Persians which altered not. It could be held with truth that it is this reliance on the artificialities of law, long after they have served their purpose, that has made Revolutions necessary. State constitutions were made for man; but most legislators nowadays treat humanity as mere raw material for the making of constitutions. Law-making has become practically the staple industry of the nation. One can foresee the day when Australia will be visited by statesmen of foreign lands, seeking light on the making of new constitutions, and perhaps when the great staple industries of wool and mutton-growing have languished owing to the great mass of the people being engaged in the manufacture, perfection, administering and interpreting laws, and arguing about suggested new laws, a great export trade in ready-made laws for the use of more backward states will spring up, and bring fame and wealth to Australia.

On the other hand, it is well to be prepared for the worst. "Ill Deeds the land, to hastening ills a prey," when laws accumulate and men decay. If Australia gave more attention to the production of men, and less to the production of laws, our state would be the more gracious. As it is, the future citizen of Australia seems like to be a poor creature, duly registered, licensed, numbered, and indexed, with his trade, his hours of work and leisure, his rates of pay and his means of recreation, his modes of thinking, his visits to the ballot box, the number of his family, and, indeed, his every interest, action, and duty as a member of society duly prescribed for him, and regulated by law. There will be no room for the free play of the human spirit. The historic mission of the working class need not trouble us; all will be done, and the Social Millennium brought about in the smoothest way, without a drop of bloodshed. The lawyers and the politicians will do it. The workers need not worry; and they are asked to do is to keep on working; the lexocrats will do the rest. It is a great picture—of a Great State!

WALTER GREIG (*Tramway Record*, Melbourne).

THE LAW OF THE PASSPORT.

To the natural man a plough does not seem a dangerous implement. Our ordinary eyes do not see a farmer as fit for treasons and stratagems and spoils. But in the official mind things are not what they seem. What they may be nobody who has not the official temperament can guess, but the universal law is that all unofficial persons must be put down with a strong hand. Therefore we have no sympathy to offer to the farmer on the French-Italian frontier whose sad case has just been laid before us. A man who has anything to do with a frontier in these days is asking for trouble. His plea that he had no notion the officials would be so pedantic with him is not to be admitted. A man in a civilised country must be presumed to know the nature of officials. Ignorance, though honest, of their capacity for unreason is no excuse for failure to be prepared against any extravagance of formalities. Our farmer has for years been outraging the most sacred convictions of all the Foreign Offices. He has been coming and going freely between France and Italy without a passport. There is—we write it with horror—not one single official in either country who has ever cast a swift, perfunctory, uncomprehending glance and stamped an illegible stamp on any papers of his. The man has simply gone about his business as if there were no such creatures as officials in the world. The case ought to have been brought before the League of Nations as striking at the very foundations of European civilisation. But what the ordinary man will ask eagerly is how the fellow did the trick. His case is peculiar. Most of his farm is in France, but some hundred yards of plough-land extend over the Italian frontier. It has been his anarchic practice to plough up all this strip, harrow it, and roll and reap it as and when he thought best, treating the frontier as if it was not there. Even the official world hears of things in time. The news of this antinomian farmer having reached Rome, a decree has gone forth that he must provide himself with a passport before he turns another furrow of Italian soil. We like to think of agricola stopping his team as he approaches the precise point where he leaves France for Italy and handing his passport to a gloomy guardian of the frontier, repeating the operation as he enters France from Italy on the return journey mutatis mutandis, and so on ad infinitum. Thus is authority vindicated. Thus do officials answer the end of their being created. The passport system, it was written long ago, is the most ingenious invention for impeding honest folk and expediting the rogue. It must have also honourable mention for its value in providing employment for numbers of officials who would not otherwise find any means of serving their country. If our farmer has enforced these truths on an ignorant world he has not lived in vain.

—*Daily Telegraph* (21/2/27).

"FREEDOM'S" BIRTHDAY FUND.

We acknowledge with thanks the receipt of the following donations to date (March 8) since our last issue:—Previously acknowledged, £70 10s.—G. P. 3s., W. B. Carter £1, L. Kislink 4s. 2d., Mr. Siegel £1 0s. 6d., S. Rubin 4s. 2d., Rosenblum 8s. 3d., Rudash 4s. 2d., V. Levine 4s. 2d., Mr. Brown 4s. 2d., Mr. Zigmund 4s. 2d., Mrs. Kataman 4s. 2d., Mr. Plotnick 4s. 2d., M. Kislink 4s. 2d., Ella Twynam 5s., A Sympathiser 10s., A. J. R. 10s., R. Pesticcio 2s. 6d., L. G. Wolfe 5s., S. Frost £1, A. Banks 2s. 6d., L. M. Fagin 8s. 10d., J. Siegel 4s., C. Helper 4s., B. Tmelman 4s., S. Siegel 4s., G. Dudnick 4s., S. Packer 4s., Leonard D. Abbott 10s., C. Blandy 2s. 6d., A Capitalist £1 1s. 5d., J. W. Fleming 10s. Total, £85 11s.

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"BRITISH IMPERIALISM IN CHINA."

This little book of 64 pages, by Elinor Burns (published by the Labour Research Department, 162, Buckingham Palace Road, S.W.1; price 6d.), has been issued at a very opportune moment. Although the press is full of telegrams and articles about the struggle between China and Great Britain, the underlying causes of it are seldom mentioned. In this book the author tells us of the shameless methods by which British capitalists first seized Chinese territory in 1842 and have since increased their foothold until to-day, when we see British soldiers, armed with the latest scientific weapons, landed at Hongkong and Shanghai to protect that stolen territory from an awakened Chinese nation. The story of the loans forced on China and the methods by which concessions for railways were obtained is not very pleasant reading for a Britisher who has been nurtured on the piffle of patriotic pedagogues, but he will realise why Nationalist China is so bitterly anti-British. Other Powers have taken part in the scramble for territory and concessions quite as shamelessly and brutally as Britain, but the latter was first and foremost and is therefore regarded in China as the principal enemy. Many useful and interesting facts are published in this book, which should have a wide circulation at this critical moment in Great Britain's relations with China.

"NEW TACTICS IN SOCIAL CONFLICT."

This was the subject of discussion at the twelfth annual conference of the League for Industrial Democracy held on June 25 to 27 last at Cape Tammment, Pennsylvania. Among those who took part were well-known figures in the American Labour movement, besides others qualified to speak with authority on various phases of the conflict between Capital and Labour. Here we learn about company Unions, industrial welfare schemes, profit sharing and bonus systems, and various other methods by which employers keep their workers in submission and immune from the spirit of revolt supposed to animate Trade Unionism. Fearing that these methods may not be quite successful, a most elaborate spy system has also been organised by outside agencies, who have their paid agents in almost every large industrial concern and even on the executives of Trade Unions. On the other hand, Trade Unionism is developing forms of Capitalism. Labour banks are steadily increasing in numbers and capital resources, and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers owns a mine in which it employs non-Union men. American Economic Imperialism was also discussed at the Conference, and much light was thrown on the financial control of South American States by U.S. Banks.

The book is published (in cloth) at 50 cents by the Vanguard Press, 80 Fifth Avenue, New York City. This press has published a number of radical books, including works by Anarchistic writers. They are all cloth bound, and at 50 cents are very good value. Many new volumes are promised, and the aim of this press is to publish radical books on a non-profit basis.

"WORLD REFORMATION BY MONETARY REVOLUTION."

The predominant part that banking plays to-day in the exploitation of the masses is now recognised. The Labour and Socialist press devotes much space to this matter, but it is religiously tabooed by the capitalist press. Mr. Samuel Bottomley's book, "World Reformation by Monetary Revolution" (The Martian Publishing Co., 1 Wesleyan Avenue, Providence, Rhode Island, U.S.A.; price, $1.00), is a scathing indictment of what he terms the "atrociously unjust financial imposition and oppression" which is "fast breeding violent insurrection." He says: "The peoples of all Europe to-day are crying aloud for financial relief. Never before in the history of the world did there exist such colossal and impossible debts, never were so many necks and limbs figuratively worn red raw by the galling fetters of a rapacious plutocracy; never was labour so strongly pressed upon to accept lower wages and longer hours; never was a revolution more needed, more justified, more holy and righteous than the one we are advocating and earnestly calling for." And he goes on to declare that the "monstrous money combine, with its probable less than fifty principal agents, is unquestionably the dominant ruling power on earth." His remedy is the nationalising of all banking and credit, and the adoption of an international medium of exchange. We have no faith in any financial reform or revolution which would leave land monopoly untouched; but, apart from his proposed remedy, Mr. Bottomley's exposure of the disastrous effects of the money monopoly is well worth reading, especially the chapter devoted to the agreement funding Britain's debt to the U.S.A. "No such bunco transaction could have been imposed on Wall Street sharpers, for even their office boys would have known better than commit such a blunder." But if we were to nationalise banking in this country to-day, Mr. Baldwin, who negotiated that agreement, and his friends would be in control of the new financial system. Should we be any better off then?

Publications Received.

"The Comradeship of Economic Equality." 3d. Farnham, Surrey: British Llano Circle, 2 Stanley Villas, Guildford Road.

"Homo Sapiens and Other Verses." By Henry S. Salt. 1s. London: Watts & Co., Johnson's Court, E.C.4.

"British Imperialism in Malaya." 6d. "The Development of Machines in Production." By A. Sorner. 6d. London: Labour Research Department, 162 Buckingham Palace Road, S.W.1.

"Der Anarchismus von Proudhon zu Kropotkin." Seine historische Entwicklung in den Jahren 1859–1880. Von Max Nettlau. Brosch. Mk.5; Leinen Mk.7. Berlin: *Der Syndikalist*.

"Consideraciones Filosoficas." Obras Completas de Miguel Bakunin, Vol. III. Prologo de Max Nettlau. Traduccion D.A. de Santillan. $1.50. Buenos Aires: *La Protesta*, Calle Peru 1837.

"El Aventurero de Amor." Por Han Ryner. Version Espanola por J. Khalde. 2.50 pesetas. Barcelona: *La Revista Blanca*, Oliveras 30, Gulnardo.

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